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ABSTRACT

One of a series of 20 literary magazine profiles written to help faculty advisors wishing to start or improve their publication, this profile provides information on staffing and production of "Chips from the Tree of Knowledge," the magazine published by Washington Senior High School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The introduction describes the literary magazine contest (and criteria), which was sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and from which the 20 magazines were chosen. The remainder of the profile--based on telephone interviews with the advisor, the contest entry form, and the two judges' evaluation sheets--discusses (1) the magazine format, including paper and typestyles; (2) selection and qualifications of the students on staff, as well as the role of the advisor in working with them; (3) methods used by staff for acquiring and evaluating student submissions; (4) sources of funding for the magazine, including fund raising activities if applicable, and production costs; and (5) changes and problems occurring during the advisor's tenure, and anticipated changes. The 1984 issue of the magazine is appended. (HTH)

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AN EXEMPLARY HIGH SCHOOL LITERARY MAGAZINE: CHIPS FROM THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

Compiled by

Hilary Taylor Holbrook

INTRODUCTION

In 1984, the National Council of Teachers of English began a national competition to recognize student literary magazines from senior high, junior high, and middle schools in the United States, Canada, and the Virgin Islands. Judges in the state competitions for student magazines were appointed by state leaders who coordinated the competition at the state level.

The student magazines were rated on the basis of their literary quality (imaginative use of language; appropriateness of metaphor, symbol, imagery; precise word choice; rhythm, flow of language), types of writing included (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama), quality of editing and proofreading, artwork and graphic design (layout, photography, illustrations, typography, paper stock, press work), and frontmatter and pagination (title page, table of contents, staff credits). Up to 10 points were also either added for unifying themes, cross-curricular involvement, or other special considerations, or subtracted in the case of a large percentage of outside professional and/or faculty involvement.

In the 1984 competition, 290 literary magazines received ratings of "Above average," 304 were rated "Excellent," and 44

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In the 1984 competition, 290 literary magazines received ratings of "Above average," 304 were rated "Excellent," and 44 earned "Superior" ratings from state contest judges. On the basis of a second judging, 20 of the superior magazines received the competition's "Highest Award."

As a special project, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills has selected 20 magazines from those receiving "Superior" ratings to serve as models for other schools wishing to start or improve their own student literary magazines. The profiles of these magazines are based on the faculty advisor's contest entry sheet, the judges' evaluation sheets, and interviews with the faculty advisors. Where possible, the magazines themselves have been appended. Information for ordering copies of the magazines is contained at the end of each profile.

CHIPS FROM THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

Washington Senior High School

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Principal: Robert Caselli

Faculty Advisor: Janet Klawiter

Student Editor: Diane Doggett

One of two high schools in the city, Washington Senior High School is a three year public school located in Sioux Falls, an eastern South Dakota city of approximately 90,000 residents. There are few minority residents in Sioux Falls, but the school's 1,500 students come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Washington High has published Chips from the Tree of Knowledge, its student literary and art magazine, for over 50 years.

FORMAT: NEW DIMENSIONS

Chips has undergone many changes in format during its 52 years. The 1984 issue measures 9"x 6" wide, although the format for subsequent issues has been changed to 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", to reduce printing costs. The cover, printed on brick-red felt finish card stock, is illustrated with a drawing of a "tree of knowledge" medallion and ribbon. The title is sketched in ink beneath the medallion.

Center-stapeled and printed on grey felt finish paper, the text is in 7 point Spartan typeface, with titles in 8 point bold and authors in 7 point italic. Photos and artwork are placed

throughout the magazine, with line drawings illustrating some of the entries. For several issues, the staff has included an artist to illustrate some entries; other times the staff has commissioned an art student to do a work complementing a particular story or poem.

PRODUCTION: MIXED BLESSING

Any students interested in working on the magazine may apply. The advisor then selects staff members, including editors, who are chosen according to leadership ability. Beginning with the 1987 issue, applicants will be asked to include writing samples and, in an interview with the advisor and other staff members, evaluate two written works.

Janet Klawiter, who has been the advisor for Chips for 13 years, tries to include students with different skills, interests, backgrounds, and personalities. She sees this diversity on the staff as a "mixed blessing": different points of view make the staff and the magazine dynamic, but can also create conflicting opinions that sometimes hinder the decision-making process. Ms. Klawiter sees her advisor role as one of consultant, occasionally referee, in trying to help the staff members look closely at a work--what features make it good or poor.

The ten to fourteen staff members previously met after school, but since the 1985 issue, production work is done during class time. All writing and artwork are submitted by students, while design and layout are done by staff members. Staff also complete 80 percent of the editing and 70 percent of the proofreading, with faculty completing the remainder. Printing and

paste-up for the 1984 edition were done by a commercial printer. Past issues of the magazine were printed by students in the district print shop, but commercial printing allowed the staff more flexibility in design. Ms. Klawiter notes, however, that the staff may return to the district print shop, because commercial estimates have been high, and the printing quality less than satisfactory.

SUBMISSIONS: AN EFFECTIVE EVALUATION METHOD

Submissions of student works for publication in Chips is encouraged by means of daily announcements and posters. Sometimes staff members will speak to individual classes to invite submissions, and English and art teachers also encourage students to submit noteworthy pieces. Ms. Klawiter notes that there is no shortage of submissions--for the 1985 issue the staff received 226 entries. The magazine does not accept faculty works.

Early in the year, the advisor and staff spend time learning how to evaluate the poems and short stories. In what Ms. Klawiter calls "a very effective evaluation method," the advisor removes the names from the submissions, so that they are anonymous when the staff evaluates them. Because entries are chosen for quality and because staff members are selected in part for their writing ability, the magazine is sometimes accidently "heavily staff written." Ms. Klawiter also acknowledges that it is sometimes uncomfortable for a staff member to sit through an evaluation of his or her work without becoming defensive or revealing the author's identity. These problems notwithstanding,

the evaluation method eliminates personal bias, and focuses the selection process on the merits of the work.

FUNDING: FIFTY/FIFTY

The magazine receives approximately 50 percent of its $600-$700 budget from district funding, and the other 50 percent is raised through sale of the magazine. Copies are sold to doctors' offices and the local fine arts center, but Ms. Klawiter admits that these account for insignificant portion of the sales. The staff produces the magazine at a cost of $1.50 per copy, for a 350-400 print run of 48 pages, and sells it for $2.00 each.

CHANGES: PRODUCTION, STAFF, AND PRINTING

Since the 1984 issue, the production of Chips has undergone several changes. Perhaps most notable is the establishment of a class period, during which the staff members meet to explore writing evaluation methods, select entries for publication, and design and assemble the magazine. This course is offered on a credit/no credit basis.

A second change will involve the selection of staff members, beginning with the 1987 edition, as noted previously. Finally, the printing process has posed various problems for the staff. In the past, it has been economical and an excellent experience for staff members to print the magazine in the district print shop. More recently, contracting for commercial printing, although more expensive, has allowed the staff to choose from a great range of typeface and printing options. However, due to either cost or quality control, the printing phase of production will be returned to the district print shop.

In light of these changes--or perhaps in spite of them, the staff of Washington High School will no doubt continue to produce a high-quality publication, perhaps for another 50 years.

**

Copies of Chips may be obtained from

Washington Senior High School

315 S. Main Avenue

Sioux Falls, SD 57102

Cost: $2.00 (plus postage)

CHIPS

FROM THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

Volume L, 1984

Washington Senior High School
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHIPS OF GOLD, *Lisa Thompson* 4
A LITTLE INSPIRATION, *Lee Ellen Pfeiffer* 6
YOUR EYES, *Tim Steib* 7
DREAMS, *Eddie Cornelius* 7
DEBATE: A SUICIDE MISSION, *Jenny Strange* 8
SNAKE OF RAIN, *Dinda Gravett* 10
GRAY, *Tim Steib* 10
THE APPLE, *Joanie Parker* 12
THE DISTANT SUNS, *Joanie Parker* 13
JUST A THOUGHT, *Lee Ellen Pfeiffer* 14
AN AMERICAN FLAG, *Julie Knutson* 15
THE BIG SNORT PRIZE, *Lisa Thompson* 16
METAMORPHOSIS, *Kris Andersen* 17
SONG OF THE MOUNTAIN, *Shelly Boos* 18
THOUGHT, *Dan Kuyper* 18
DAWN, *Kris Andersen* 18
MUSINGS, *Julie Knutson* 19
THE CITY, *Kris Andersen* 19
BEHIND THE DOOR, *Rich Krueger* 20
TEACHING A CHILD, *Rich Krueger* 21
INTERLUDE, *Dawn Doggett* 23
THE OLD MAN AND PLATO, *Joanie Parker* 24
MICROCHIPS, *Peter Hanson* 26
CAUTION: DRAGON CROSSING, *Courtney Brown* 26
MORNING, *Scott Iseminger* 28
HOLEY THOUGHTS, *Peter Hanson* 29
NOT JUST ANOTHER LOVE POEM, *Courtney Brown* 29
THE FICKLE FINGER OF FATE, *Courtney Brown* 30
I REMEMBER GRANDPA, *Kris Andersen* 32
VIOLENCE SOLVES EVERYTHING, *Kris Andersen* 32
THE GIRL WITH THE DANCING EYES, *Julie Knutson* 33

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, *Meg Klawiter* 34
DARIN'S HAIKU, *Darin Juenke* 35
THE BEAUTY OF GRAVEYARDS, *Jeanne Ford* 36
THE AFFLICTION, *Eric Wells* 37
MAGIC OR MONEY? *Courtney Brown* 37
SITTING ON A LONELY SHORE, *Meta Davis* 39
SOMEONE'S HIDING, *Sherri Hodgin* 40
DISCOVERY, *Emily Snyder* 41
HER CREATION, *Dena Brandeberry* 42
THE LEGEND, *Dawn Doggett* 43
GOOD-BYE, FALL, *Dena Brandberry* 44
WHY? *Scott Iseminger* 45
FORGIVENESS, *Courtney Brown* 46
WHEN I GROW UP, *Dawn Doggett* 47

ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Tracie Mallatt cover,26,33,42,44
Richard Brown 11,39
Julie Knutson 6,12,15
Richard Krueger 27,35
Teri Dubro 22
Lisa Thompson 28,36
Mike Neumann 31
Dave Peterson 38

CHIPS OF GOLD

The writer sat cross-legged on the floor next to the window, deciding what to write about. In the past, writing had come easily to her. Today, however, nothing came to her mind.

The doorbell rang and she answered it. It was her oldest sister dressed in a black pinstriped designer suit. She was wearing three gold necklaces of different lengths. The writer was sure her sister had made them. Victoria was a goldsmith and owned the finest jewelry store in New York City.

"Hi, Victoria. Come on in," the writer said. Victoria acknowledged her sister and walked toward the torn sofa, the sound of black high heels pounding on the old wooden floor. The writer followed silently, her light blond ponytail bobbing as she walked. She was dressed in a grey sweatshirt and sweatpants that had a hole in the knee.

"How are you, Victoria?" the writer asked, noticing her sister staring out the cracked window at the alley. "What brings you to this end of New York?"

Victoria returned her gaze to the writer. "I wanted to see how you were. How is your writing coming along?"

The writer smiled. She knew the real reason why Victoria had come today. "I was doing well for a while," the writer said, "but the past few days I've been stumped. I think a lot about what to write, but nothing is quite right."

Victoria looked seriously into her sister's misty blue eyes. "You are a good writer, but you've got to start being realistic. This isn't college--it's the real world. Very few people can make a living from writing."

The writer looked at a large crack in her chipped plaster wall. "I do make enough money to live on." She looked up with a half smile and pinched herself on the arm. "I am living, right?"

Victoria walked to the refrigerator and opened it; she saw a half gallon of milk, a carton of yogurt, and three shriveled carrots. "Yes," she sighed, "you are living, but I don't see how." Victoria turned and faced her sister. "I know I've asked you this a lot in the past, but now that you're having problems writing, maybe you'll see my way more realistically." Victoria put a finger through her wavy, thick, coffee-black hair. "I want you to work with me at the jewelry store. I know you'd have the talent for it." A sparkle danced into her large black eyes. "It is so satisfying to create a piece of gold jewelry, I know you'd come to prefer it to writing. Your income would increase dramatically. You could live in a decent apartment, eat solid food, and wear beautiful clothes--not to mention the exquisite jewelry you would own." She took her sister's hand and guided it to her longest gold necklace. "Feel this," she said in a dramatic whisper. "Isn't it beautiful?"

The writer stared incredulously at her sister. Victoria, the dominating older sister who constantly was trying to run her life. A few times she had almost let her. The writer had never got along very well with her sister. As children, Victoria had always gloated upon the importance of money and labels. She was always confident and succeeded in everything she did. The writer stood in awe of her. Victoria never completely understood her sister and thought it was foolish for her to dream of becoming a writer. In the past, the writer had felt inferior to her sister. Now she also felt a resentment, an anger.

"I'm sorry, Vic," the writer said. "Working in a jewelry store isn't my style. I like my life the way it is." The writer began looking out the window, lost in her own thoughts. "I don't need money and nice things to be happy. I love to write, and in that sense I am rich. Each piece of writing I create is like a chip of gold to me. It is precious and indestructable. No one can take it away from me--not even you. It is a part of me."

Victoria's tone softened. "I guess each of us has her own idea of what gold is."

The writer smiled at her sister. Victoria was beginning to understand her. There was still a feeling of inferiority and resentment, but she felt it slowly beginning to diminish.

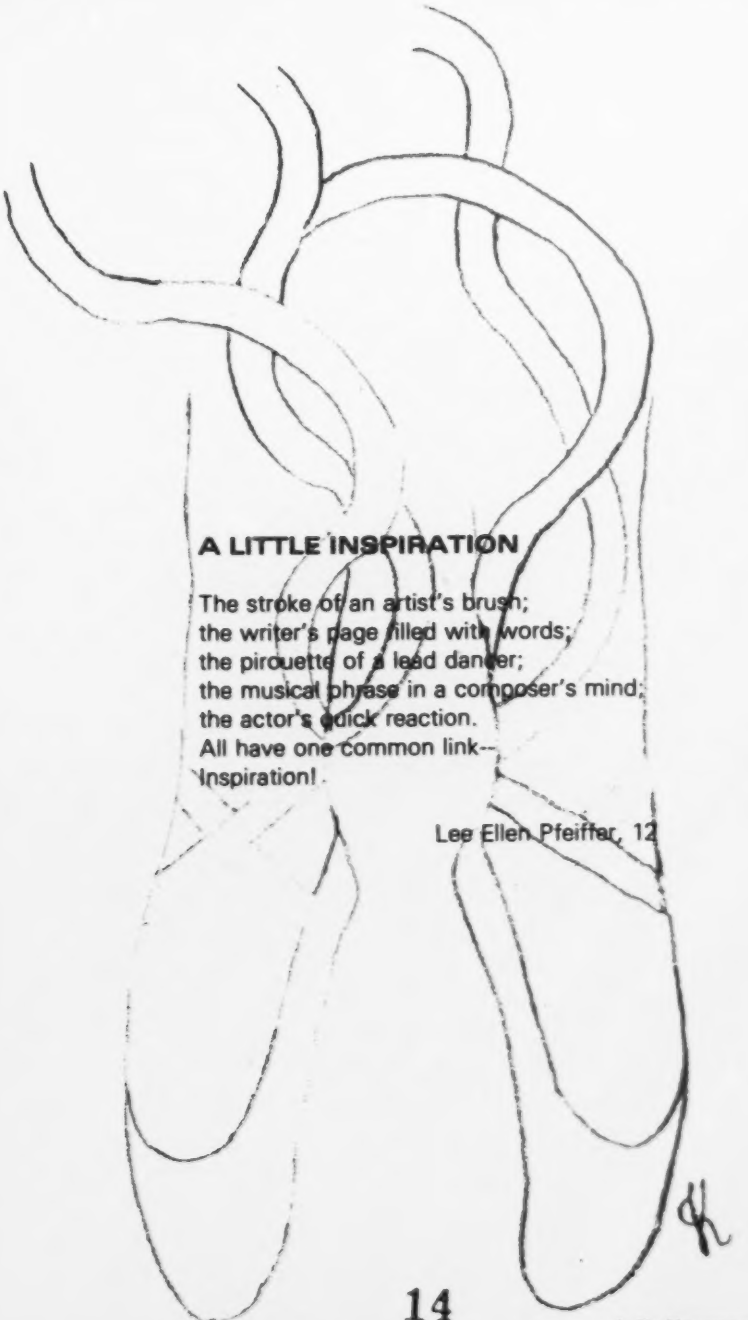
Victoria unlatched the clasp to one of her exquisite gold necklaces and placed it around the writer's neck. "I want you to have this," she said in a gentle tone.

"Thank you, Victoria. I don't know what to say. It's beautiful."

The writer walked Victoria to the door; then they said good-bye. The rickety door made a loud echo throughout the apartment building when it shut.

Alone, the writer thought about the visit with her sister. With her fingertip she felt the fineness of each link of gold. She realized why Victoria had given it to her. This gold was different from the writer's gold, but they were equally beautiful. Like the two sisters, each had a different type of quality. When the writer wore the necklace, she would be thankful she was different from her sister. She was never meant to be a goldsmith. She was meant to be a writer. Yes, a writer. These thoughts had to be written about. With a smile, the writer went to her desk and began creating a chip of gold.

Lisa Thompson, 12



A LITTLE INSPIRATION

The stroke of an artist's brush;
the writer's page filled with words;
the pirouette of a lead dancer;
the musical phrase in a composer's mind;
the actor's quick reaction.
All have one common link--
Inspiration!

Lee Ellen Pfeiffer, 12

14

Julie Knutson, 11

YOUR EYES

Your eyes
Sometimes bright, sometimes blue
Not blue bird--
Blue boohoo

Your eyes
Sometimes kind, sometimes green
Not green grass--
Green mean.

Your eyes
Sometimes serious, sometimes brown
Not brown crayon--
Brown clown.

Your eyes
Sometimes searching, always finding
My eyes.

Tim Steib, 12

DREAMS

Late at night when I lie down,
My mind takes off without a sound.
It travels roads to many places
Of many sounds and many faces.
Speeding through a maze of lights,
I gaze at all the startling sights.
Then 'way too soon it all slows down,
And I float gently to the ground.
Then I wake and lie in bed
And recall the journey through my head.

Eddie Cornelius, 10

DEBATE: A SUICIDE MISSION

I. Ridiculous level of responsibility is needed
(Before one decides whether to sign up for Team Debate, it is necessary for him to realize what he's getting himself into.)
   A. Huge commitment
   (This activity requires one to give himself up for the sake of argument.)
      1. Sacrifice of social life
      (More painful than the harmless words imply; this is not an easy task for the normal teenager!)
      2. Other school work suffers
      (Maybe not one's major concern, but does affect later life.)
   B. Must be prepared
   (We're not talking any slipshod deal, either!)
      1. Lots of research
      (Usually of rather uninteresting topics. One gets to know each librarian like his own mother.)
      2. Cutting, pasting, slugging cards
      (May not require a lot of brains, but is boring as _____.)
      3. Perpetual typing
      (Just because you don't know how to type doesn't get you out of this; everyone suffers broken fingernails as well as the reek of white-out.)
      4. Mental awareness
      (An alert appearance is most likely a mask that each debater must adorn when it's time to debate. No matter that one hasn't slept for four days--he must look vaguely interested or at least awake during the round.)
   C. Pleasing the coach
   (Directors of this activity tend to want perfection. Yes, you and I know it's impossible; but a debater constantly strives for it just to earn a bearable ride home in a crammed-full van.)

II. Endangers one's life
(When handing one's body, mind, soul, and briefcase over to this activity, one takes certain risks.)
   A. Gradually deteriorating health
      1. Severe tension
      (This a constant state of the debater; it is a 24-hour-a-day suffering; it is not comforting!)
      2. Lack of sleep
      (Goes hand-in-hand with the activity. One is working on debate continuously--whether it be during a block of consciousness or a zombie-like state.)

3. Nutrition deficiency
   (One tends to live on caffeine, Tostitos, and Big Macs.)
4. No recovery time
   (A debater is involved day-in and day-out, ruling out the possibility of resting after a hard weekend on the circuit.)

B. Possibly fatal situations
1. By opposing teams
   (Cross-examination often gets hostile--especially when one is making a fool out of the rival--or vice-versa.)
2. By partner
   (Oh, those contradictions that always materialize between the two negative speeches!)
3. By coach
   (A coach's disgusted look from the audience usually foreshadows a scene in the hall after the round.)
4. By weather conditions
   (Being stuck in a shabby Motel 6 for an extra night becomes routine.)

III. Sets lifelong habits
A. Argumentativeness
   (Being a debater gives one the opportunity to verbally tear apart anyone; even if one is wrong, he sounds convincing!)
B. Organization
   (Debate is very individual; each member of the activity finds his own system of organization, but 99% of the team outlines at least as well and as mechanically as writing his own name.)

Jennifer Strange, 11

THE SNAKE OF RAIN

The slow, slinking snake of rain
slithers down my windowpane,
and on down, down the street--
even though it has no feet--
to become a swirling, surging mass
of pythons whose dinner hour is past.
The hungry hissing of the snake of rain
fills my mind with deep disdain.
But it will be revenge I take
when the sun returns to make them bake,
to dry their hisses to a whisper,
to broil their scales 'til they no longer slither.
In this desert they coil about;
then comes the inevitable drought.
As arid death comes to the snake of rain,
my mind releases its disdain.

Dinda Gravett, 11

GRAY

Rainy day,
  Everything is gray,
  The sky, the air, me.

October sky,
  Everything will die,
  The leaves, the colors, me.

April showers,
  Still no flowers,
  Only dirt, (or mud), and me.

Windy day,
  Blow away the gray
  From the sky, from the air, from me.

Tim Steib, 12

Richard Brown, 12

THE APPLE

I had to go over to Winney's house to get an apple. Winney's is the last house on our street. Beyond is a field of grass and weeds. Winney's sidewalk never has any abandoned toys on it because Winney's dad doesn't want to get sued if someone trips over a skate and breaks an arm. The latch on Winney's gate sticks, and I kicked another board loose trying to get it opened. That brought the total up to three. Winney's house is two stories high. I could see Jason in the attic window. He tried to drop his red fire engine on me. It hit the porch roof, slid the width of it, and landed on the walk where it broke into two main parts and about a zillion other little ones.

"Jason, you'd better get down here and pick this up before I trip over it and sue you."

With that threat, the little face disappeared and shortly reappeared at the front door. He looked at the destruction that had become of his fire engine and burst into tears. I walked around him and into the entrance. Winney appeared with Joey in tow.

"I need an apple, Win."

"An apple?" she looked at me none too surely.

"Yeah."

She left for the kitchen and came back with an apple. I looked at it. It had baby teeth marks all over it, probably from Katie, who has only two teeth. The stem was half-way broken off. There were yellowish spots all over it.

"Well, are you just gonna gawk at it all day?"

"Huh? Oh."

I took it in my hand. It was smooth except for the teeth indentations in it. It was sticky. It smelled ripe, possibly because of the teeth marks. It was juicy. A droplet ran down to my chin when I took a bite. It was sweet but mushy. I chewed on an extra-mushy spot. Wiping the juice off my chin, I handed the apple with the tiny teeth marks and the one big bite back to Winney and thanked her. Then I skipped home.

Joanie Parker, 10

Julie Knutson 11

THE DISTANT SUNS

Lying on our backs on the hill behind my house, Winney and I were watching the stars. Distant sun-watching, as Winney preferred to call it.

"I wish I could visit that star right there."

"Which one?" I asked.

"That one, just to the right of the Big Dipper."

"I looked at the distant sun she had pointed out. I contemplated that statement for a while.

"What star would you want to visit?" Winney was probing me with those cat-like green eyes of hers. I turned my face to the sky again. A bright star caught my attention, and I was going to point it out, when I noticed a smaller one above it.

"See that star three over from yours? The big one?"

"That's the star you want to go to?"

"No, the smaller one just above it."

"Why?"

Why? I didn't know. Because it looked far away? Because it happened to catch my eye? Why did Winney always ask questions like this?

"I guess 'cause it caught my eye."

"Was it the first one that caught your eye?"

I thought about the bright sun I had seen first.

"No."

"Then why did you pick that one?"

I didn't have to answer that. I could've gotten exasperated with Winney. But I didn't. I found myself contemplating my answer. I thought about it for a long time.

Far away a dog barked; not so far away, two young people were engaged in giddy laughter. Crickets chirped and a breeze stirred the grass. But Winney and I weren't aware of any of it. We were millions of miles away on our distant suns. Finally, I broke our silence.

"I picked that star because, well, I can't touch it. I can't touch it, feel it, or see what it's really like. All I can see is a speck of light that's two hundred years old, but I want to know about that star."

Winney was on her side, looking at me with those green eyes again.

"I know what you mean," Winney rolled onto her back again. "I picked mine because it seemed stable, secure, something I can depend on. It isn't so bright that it intimidates me, and it isn't so faint that I feel it can't support me. It's like a good friend--always there, passing out support and encouragement."

Her green eyes were smiling into mine and my brown eyes were smiling back.

"Speaking of support," Winney changed the subject, "I sure could use some of that stuff in algebra," and she went on to describe her confusion over trinomials.

Joanie Parker, 10

JUST A THOUGHT

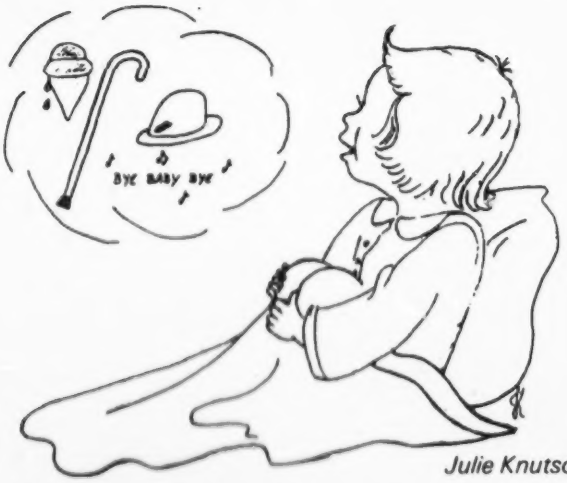
A far-away thought pops into my head--
  No, that's crazy...that's silly,
I say to myself. It could never happen.
  Forget I ever thought about it.
Then again, anything's possible--or so they say--
  But not that. That's stupid, just forget it.
But what if...no! Stop thinking about it
  Before you get your hopes up. Okay--
It's forgotten.

Isn't it possible though...?
  I really must quit thinking about it.
But wouldn't it be wonderful if...they did say...
  Oh, I wish it could come true...I hope...I

What? You're kidding, aren't you?
  Really? You're not just teasing?
You mean it's really happening?
  I don't believe it--but I'm here!
Wow! I'm really lucky--this is great!

Wait..what's wrong? No, you can't mean that!
  This can't be happening, not now.
Everything was great...all right, if that's
  The way it has to be. I guess it was
Too good to be true. It was just a thought
  I had once.

Lee Ellen Pfeiffer, 12



Julie Knutson, 11

AN AMERICAN FLAG

Walking hand-in-hand, looking at birds' nests ...
Steak samples every Saturday night ...
Roasting marshmallows on the grill ...
Badminton in the backyard ...
Lemonade in the shade after mowing ...
Dairy Queen on hot summer nights ...
Riding the carousel at Lollipop Park ...
Photographs at Christmas time ...
Pickled pig's feet ...
Fourth of July family picnics ...
His favorite potato salad ...
Bye Baby Bye--sung into the mirror ...
Wake up, Snicklefritz ...
A kiss on top of all that stubble ...
His old raccoon coat ...
Sweet scent of his aftershave ...
Winter galoshes by the back door ...
My ballerina bracelet ...
Ice cream as a prize ...
Midnight raids on the refrigerator ...
Laughing at Johnny Carson ...
Slow steps ...
A cane ...
Tired eyes ...
His little girl has grown up ...
An American flag--draped in memory.

Julie Knutson, 11

THE BIG SNORT PRIZE

"Mommy! Mommy! I didn't snort all day!" I yelled in a triumphant voice when I came home from school. "Do I get my snort prize now?"

Mommy hugged me. "Oh, I'm so proud of you, dear. Now close your eyes and I'll bring you your snort prize."

I put my pudgy fingers over my eyes. In a moment Mommy came back.

"Okay. You can open your eyes now." My deep-set blue eyes advanced in excitement and my smile was beaming when I saw my prize. It was a Mickey Mouse coloring book.

"Oh Mommy," I said in an excited whisper. "It's beautiful. Thank you." I hugged Mommy and she smiled, her blue eyes closed.

It all started somewhere in the middle of kindergarten. I had developed the habit of emitting audible pig-like snorts in public, although not on purpose. My mom was repulsed and humiliated by my frequent outbursts. She tried everything she could to stop me. Finally, as a last resort, she tried the snort prizes. Every day for a week she would give me a small prize for not snorting. If I hadn't snorted once for a whole week I would get a big snort prize, one that I could pick out myself.

The next day after school was the big day. It was the end of the week and I hadn't snorted. Mommy said I could pick out my big snort prize at Ace Hardware, where they had many toys. Both of my sisters, ages eight and nine at the time, came along to witness this thrilling event. I was overcome with happiness, because within minutes I would be getting my long-awaited snort prize.

We were still driving. My mind was filled with visions of what toy I would pick out. A huge grin wreathed my lips and my eyes were sparking. I could see the Ace Hardware sign ahead. The excitement within me grew. The anticipation was making me impatient. I could hardly contain myself. As we were turning the car toward the store, I let out a loud, ominous "snort." I put my hand over my mouth and my eyes were wide with fear.

My sister turned around and mockingly grinned at me. "Mommy! Mommy! She just snorted. She doesn't get her snort prize now, does she?"

I felt a hole in my stomach. Tears glassed up in my eyes. I was so close to getting my big snort prize and now I had lost it. This was the most traumatic thing that had happened to me in my whole five years of life.

"You didn't do it on purpose, did you, Honey?"

"No," I sniffed, then burst out crying. "I didn't mean to do it and I'm sorry and I'll never do it again too and I promise too."

Mommy smiled. "It's all right, Dear. You can still get your big snort prize. I know it was an accident. I forgive you, Sweetie."

"Thank you, Mommy." The smile came back to my face and eyes. With the sleeve of my coat, I wiped the snot from my nose.

My sister protested, "That's just not fair! You said she wouldn't get her snort prize if..."

Mommy interrupted her. "It was an accident. She was just so excited, that's all. Enough of this talk."

My sister turned to the front with an angry, defeated look on her face. I poked her on the back and she turned around. With my chin high in the air and my eyes squeezed shut, I stuck out my tongue.

The car had stopped. Mommy turned around and smiled at me. "Now," she said, "let's go in and pick out your big snort prize."

Lisa Thompson, 12

METAMORPHOSIS

Slither out of my cocoon bed,
Put on my alligator shoes.
Hide the spiders in the closet.
(They can't hurt me there.)
To the kitchen for a bite:
Black coffee, melba toast with jam.

Saddle up my new pinto,
Cruising along like a blood cell.
Shove the memories in the attic.
(What isn't seen is forgotten.)
Reality now settles in:
I'm a grain on the sandy beach

Slam the door, soak in a chair,
Drop the needle on the record.
Polish away the spots on the glassware.
(Continue the grand facade.)
Relating well to those bricks in the wall:
Do I want to live like this?

The time has come for
The butterfly to soar.
My spiders are free,
My memories live.
My glasses are spotty,
But I am grinning.

Kris Andersen, 12

SONG OF THE MOUNTAIN

The music came rolling
Out of the mountain
With a rushing cascade of sound--
All the crystal water droplets
Pouring down the symphonies.
There was a shower of classics
And the haunting beat of an
African drum.

Shelly Boos, 11

Thought
Fleeting, Elusive
Beginning, Searching, Writing
Words, Verse--Stanza, Context
Changing, Editing, Ending
Catchy, Humorous
Poem

Dan Kuyper, 12

DAWN

Follow my footsteps to
a mist-blanketed forest, through
the tangled
vines which dampen and sweep
the hidden trees.
The dominant brother, Sun dries
beneath the green leaves where the Moon has wept,
hiding one dropped morning's dew.

Kris Andersen, 12

BEHIND THE DOOR

Oak door slams
Lock clicks in place
Now I hear my mommy crying
I swallow my smile
With empty eyes
I look to the stairs
Start to climb
Daddy's yelling, Mommy's crying
At stair top I see oak door
I sit
It's dark in the unlit hall
The only light seen from
An opening between carpet and door bottom
Daddy's yelling, Mommy's crying
Left out and lonely again
It's just me in the dark
Words getting louder
My feel for love falls in a tear
And I speak in small, unsure tones
"Mommy, are you there?"
No reply
Daddy's yelling, Mommy's crying
Do they hear my weak voice?
Do they want to hear me?
I lean my head back against the wall
Tears pool in my eyes
And then stream down my cheeks
Salty taste
Silent crying
Daddy's yelling, Mommy's crying
The door swings open
Daddy rushes by me
I feel the air from swing of his leg
Mommy stands in the doorway
Staring down the stairs
My eyes meet hers
Both crying

MUSINGS

It is a wet and rainy day. The droplets of water slither down my windowpane to form puddles in the already damp earth. My kitten sits on the windowsill, pawing at the silent surprises. In the distance the trees sway, gently showering the grass below. The musty smell of this rainy day clings to me like the clouds--thick and heavy. My hands reach for my old, familiar scrapbook. With the turn of each brittle page, I strain to remember distant names and faces. School programs and old photographs make me think, "Was I really that small?" Another rainy day, years from now, perhaps I'll be looking at pictures not yet taken, with this same longing to be momentarily drawn back into the past. Carefully, I close my heavy book and glance once more at the fading cover. These last few pages I'll save for another damp and rainy day.

Julie Knutson, 11

THE CITY

Rain names the season April,
not blooming flowers or budding trees.
Horns clear the crowded, wet streets,
leaving us behind the splash.
Figures plod the broken trail
like cattle, heads down to the wind.
Solemn, grey, old edifice
crowds out the sun's bright light,
guarding man from his emotions.
Modern steel developments
cast somber shadows.
Fitting like a weathered felt hat,
I am lost in the rain's routine.

Kris Andersen, 12

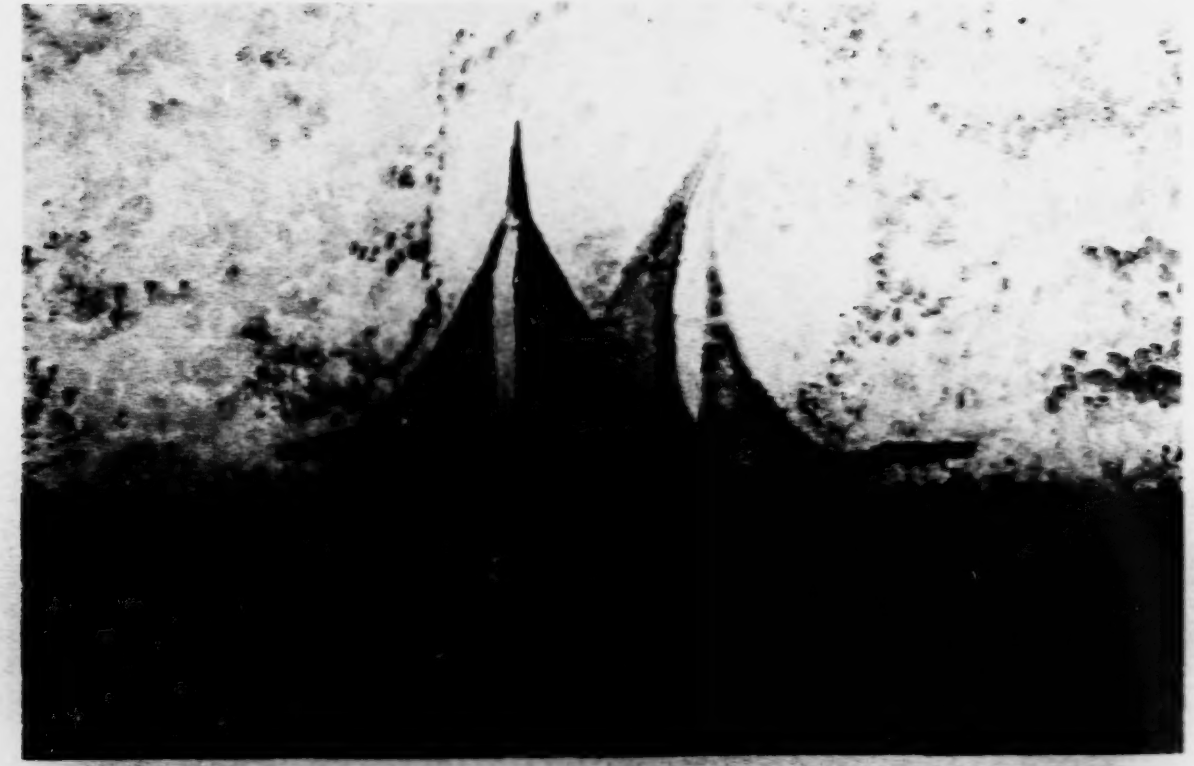
Black mascara drips from her eye
Like a sad painted clown
Lip quivering
She reaches down for me
Lifts me from my underarm
My own weight hurts
Holding me in a hug
She speaks–
"Daddy's not coming back."

Rich Krueger, 12

TEACHING A CHILD

flower pretty
petals and all
flower pretty
painted color--
"Flower pretty," the child said,
As he gazed into bursting yellow center.
With an innocent mind and exploring fingers,
Eyes open wide, he brushed the fragile top.
"Flower soft," the child said.
As the sun poured down on them,
With thin bright hair blowing in the gentle wind,
He lay and watched the flower in its breeze dance.
"Flower happy," the child said.
As he looked up at his father
With faint brows lifted,
The child asked, "What do you call it, Daddy?"
"That's a dandelion, Son, just a weed, no good."
The child looked back at the flower.
His face showed anger to his first friend.
He clasped his soft fist around its stem
And ripped the flower from its home.
"Weed dead," the child said.

Rich Krueger, 12



Teri Dubro, 12

INTERLUDE

Spring squeezed the last drop of rain from her delicate hand, and in a host of vibrant colors the earth burst forth into

summer.

The heat of summer was oppressive, but the golf courses stayed lush and green. The swimming pool was too crowded, but driving by we could hear the happy laughter of the children splashing in the water. Their lighthearted giggles made us young again.

The wrathful storms of summer kept us indoors, but over our music we were hardly aware of her wicked laughter thundering through the rhythm of the rain.

In the heat, a day at the lake was refreshing when the tiny droplets of lake water clung to our tanned skin until July's hot winds set her breath upon them.

The summer was fragrant, beautiful. Three months of freedom passed quickly. Lost in the warmth, we looked ahead to our dreams.

The nights began to grow longer, the days shorter, and a cool breeze nipped the air. The greenskeeper put away his mower for another season, and the lifeguard snapped the lock on the gate surrounding the pool. The laughter of the children subsided as they set their thoughts ahead to school. The people had all packed up and the beach was quiet. The still water mirrored our flawless reflection until the chilly winds rippled it and blew it away.

Three months ended too soon; we grasped for one last moment to hold on to--a memory to keep us warm through the winter. With our fingers still sticky from the last ice cream cone, we watched August come to an end. The trees sighed and drew the last breath of summer.

Dawn Doggett, 12

THE OLD MAN AND PLATO

It was the old man's fifth day in a row. "Doesn't he ever give up?" the desk clerk asked himself. Watching him through the glass partition, he shuddered. The clerk hoped that he wouldn't ever get that old. The old man had to be at least ninety, maybe even more. The clerk remembered when he used to be a scientist. "A damn good one, too," he thought. No one, even in his wildest dreams, would have guessed that this man would turn into the senile paranoic that he had become. The clerk laughed to himself. The old man's story of the continental shelf's falling in was actually quite entertaining. The clerk had lived in the underwater domed city all his life, and no one had even suggested such a thing until now. This old man had it in his head that the shelf was going to cave in any day now and they were doomed unless they evacuated. The old man claimed that the shudders they had been feeling was the shelf beginning to crumble. It was going to crumble so much and then POWIE! The whole shelf was going to collapse. The clerk laughed again. The old man was just trying to regain the glory of his heyday.

The clerk continued to watch the old man. His hands shook violently as the old man took a batch of papers from a battered briefcase. "That briefcase is about as ancient as that old man," he mused. The briefcase had originally been dark brown, but now most of it was worn to a yellowish color, the color of the old man's skin. A latch was broken on the case. The clerk watched it move in rhythm with the old man's shaking. A door clicked open behind him; the clerk snapped to attention.

"Sir," the clerk was talking in his most authoritative voice, "the old man is back again, Sir."

"I will dispose of him myself, once and for all." The General drove his point home by a glare into the eyes of the clerk. By the way the clerk meekly sat down, he guessed that it had worked. How he had gotten stuck with such an incompetent staff, he didn't know.

Straightening his coat with a shrug of his shoulders, he checked his part by patting it with his hand. Day by day, the part was lowered down the side of his head, as he tried vainly to cover up the ever-increasing bald spot on his head. He couldn't wait to get back to his flat and remove the waist belt that kept his belly from spilling over his belt. He really must start working out again, maybe next week. With one last straightening of the coat, he stepped through the glass partition and into the lobby. He couldn't wait until he was elected High Regency. The High Regent had the best staff to be found. Of course, he would have to go through the motions of an election, but he was sure to win.

"Sir, please, hear me out! We must..."

"Old man, I don't know what you have been doing in my office this past week, but you are interfering with the efficient running of this office and, therefore, this city. If you ever show your face again in this office, I'll have you put where you will bother absolutely no one!" As he walked out of the lobby, he almost felt sorry for the old man. Such a waste. Who would have thought that such a brilliant mind would end up like this? He wondered if he would have to put up with such things when he was High Regent.

"What has happened to the world?" the old man thought. He sank back into the orange chair and listened to the air seep out of the plastic covering. "Why won't they listen? Being old doesn't mean I'm senile. If I had made this discovery thirty years ago, everyone would be evacuated by now. Of course, the situation wasn't advanced then as now, but at least preventive measures would have been taken." He watched the young clerk get ready to leave. Such a waste. He had such a fine life ahead of him. To have him snuffed out before his time would be a tragedy. "When will it happen?" he asked himself. "Today, tomorrow, next month, next year?" Maybe it wouldn't even happen in the clerk's lifetime. He hoped not; he hated to see such a waste. If only he would listen!

The clerk looked out the glass pane into the lobby. The old man was still sitting there. He gathered his papers together and went through the door. "Excuse me, Sir, you'll have to leave." The old man just looked at him. The clerk wasn't sure he had heard him. "Sir, you'll have to leave." He said it with a little more force this time.

"Do you think I'm crazy?"

The clerk was caught off guard.

"Tell me," the old man persisted, "do you think I'm crazy?"

"I wouldn't know, Sir." The old man was making him feel foolish; he hated it when people did this to him.

"Tell me, do you know Plato?"

"No, I don't."

"I didn't think you would. Plato was a philosopher who lived in ancient Greece. He..."

"Sir, please leave." There. He had regained control of the situation.

The old man looked at him and said in a half-whisper, "You too? You were my last hope." The old man shuffled out the door and down the walk.

The clerk watched him go. The words the old man had spoken had left him with an uneasy feeling. When he locked the outside door, he felt a low vibration under his feet. "Not another tremor," he groaned. He was sick of these. "Maybe there is some truth to what the old man says, after all," he joked to himself. Just then a quake sent him into the glass door. He heard glass shattering and he lurched backwards to avoid the broken glass. A second quake sent him sprawling. Walls began to crumble. Screams and pounding footsteps were drowned out by the groaning of the earth. He looked down the walk and saw the old man picking himself up.

The old man's briefcase had fallen open and the papers were spread out on the walk. He stood aside and watched them being torn up by the feet of panicking people. He walked away and sat on a nearby bench that was still intact. He had seen the young clerk run past him. Such a waste. From within his coat he pulled out a book, "Law" by Plato. For a moment he thought about escaping. Then he heard a low rumble and the unmistakable sound of rushing water. He smiled to himself. "It was a silly idea anyway," he thought. He took one last look at the falling debris; then he began to read.

Joanie Parker, 10

MICROCHIPS

Faster than a speeding bullet,
Able to leap tall imaginations in a single bound--
The Miraculous Microchip.

Pulses of energy dancing on silicon,
Singing through computations, calculations, operations,
Millions at the bat of an eye.

A watch, a calculator, a computer--
All contain this intangible rush hour,
Essential for life in the fast lane.

Peter Hanson, 12

CAUTION: DRAGON-CROSSING

I know a place
Where dragons soar through mystical skies
and swords sing to save fair maidens,
Where superheroes fight the forces of evil
in defense of truth and justice,
Where warp drive explores the final frontier
and rebels fight for freedom.

It's for questing after dreams...
adventures...
and romance,

Not for realism, apathy,
or those satisfied with life.

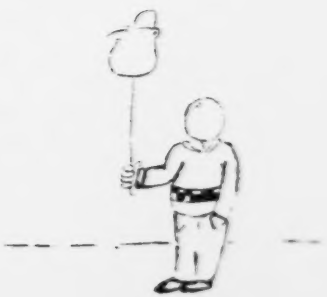
In truth,
when talking about fantasy,
accountants need not apply.
And don't look down on these dreamers
from your vaunted heights,
for there are low-flying dragons ahead.

Tracie Mallatt, 11

Courtney Brown, 12

WORLD'S MOST INTELLIGENT-LOOKING TOAD

Ben Searches for the Great Talking Rock



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Richard Krueger, 12

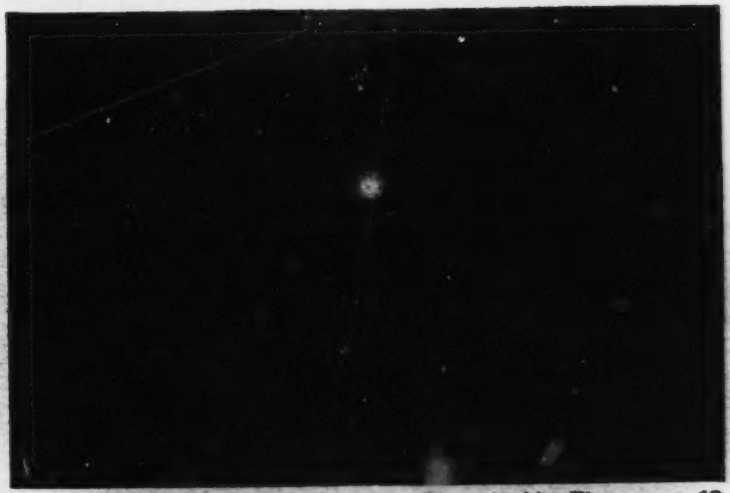


Photo by Lisa Thompson, 12

MORNING

As the sun peeks over the rooftops
and filters the grey dawn from the blue dayspring
the tulips wake and spread their cheer
the daffodils spring their scent
the midnight rainfall lingers on the lilac bush
and the strawberry blossoms
blossom

Content.

Watching, the old cat sits on the front stoop,
stretching her neck towards the sun, smiling content.
Another joins her and sits opposite, like a vase,
lifting her paw to lick.
The two cats sit and smile and blink a wink.

Content.

A breeze flows by
something in the air
what?
It is morning, bright, clear, fresh

Content.

Scott Iseminger, 12

HOLEY THOUGHTS

A hole can be many things, such as an opening in or through an object, or a depression in a surface. The word "hole" has numerous other meanings as well.

If you were to dig a hole in your backyard, when would it be a hole? Perhaps it becomes a hole when you are completely finished removing the dirt that occupies the space of the finished hole. This theory will not hold true, however, for the reason that your father might come out of the house to tell you that the hole is not yet big enough. Thus, as he has addressed it as a hole, it must already be one even though it is not yet finished. Possibly the hole in your yard forms with the lifting of the first scoop of dirt and sod from its domain, causing a depression in the surface of your lawn. Could it be that in every backyard exist an indefinite number of holes that we cannot detect because they are filled up with dirt? This is the theory that I believe.

Peter Hanson, 12

NOT JUST ANOTHER LOVE POEM

I guess
If this were a sappy love poem,
I'd say:
  "Her hair was the color of a dove,
  She was my one true love.
  But on that fateful day,
  She had to go away."
But since this isn't,
I'll just say:
  "Whether it's in the dark privacy of a theater,
  Or in the bright lights of the classroom,
  She's fun to be around."

Courtney Brown, 12

THE FICKLE FINGER OF FATE

Every once in a while, just for fun, Fate has an unpleasant tendency to hand you to the Practical Joke Department. The last time this happened to me, I was walking home in a wet, cold, gray drizzle. Somehow, through the darkness and fog, I spotted a small coin purse lying in the street. Being the nice guy I try to be, I picked it up in order to return it to the owner. Then I slogged the rest of the way home through mud.

Once I was home, I took out the purse, which was soaked, and began to dump the contents on a counter. The first thing that came out was about a gallon of water. My mother shrieked and started throwing paper towels at me. After the mess was mopped up, I dumped the purse again. First, a couple pennies fell out. Then a dime, a nickel, and a button bounced onto the counter. Next came a pipe, a few more pennies, and a bag of marijuana. With typical Practical Joke timing, my father walked into the room and asked, "What's that?"

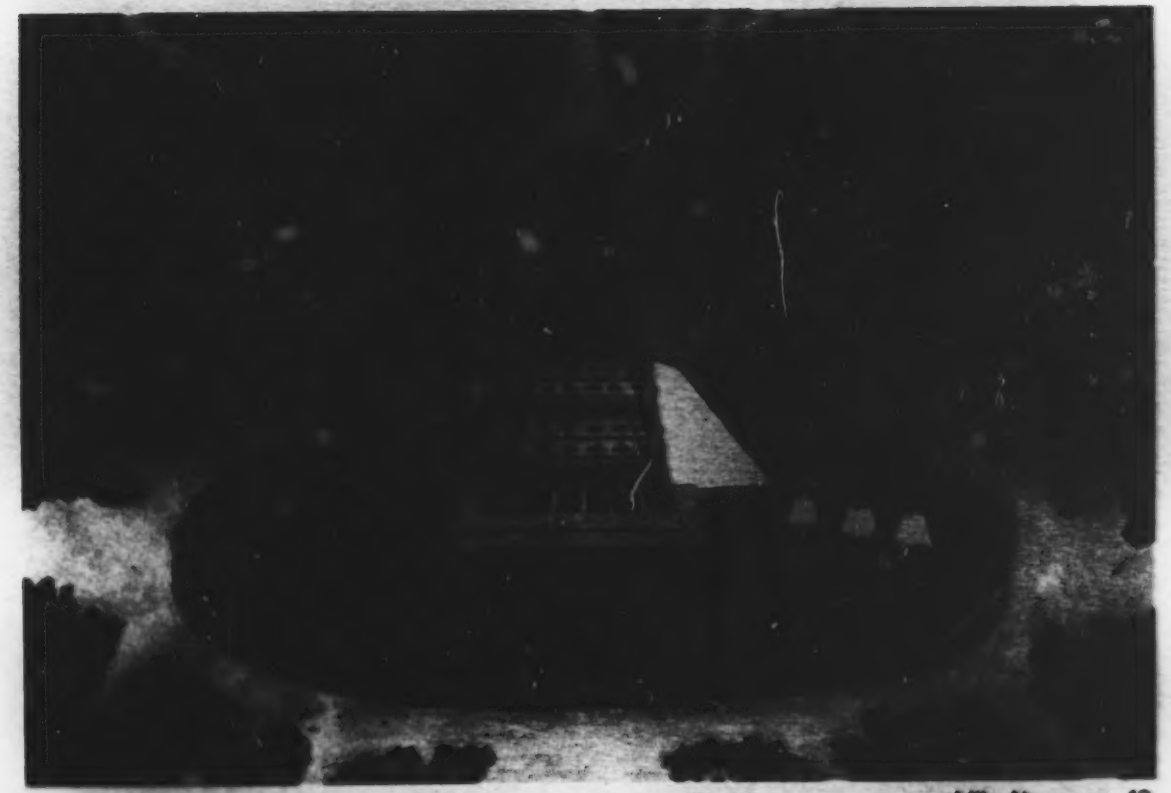
Bring quick with the quips, I responded, "In the words of a Southern sheriff, that's mara-gee-wanna, Dad."

In the infinite wisdom of a parent, my father said, "We should turn it in to the police."

Counting to ten slowly before replying, I said, "The only way this is going to the police is if you want your number-four kid to be on probation for a couple of years for possession. I can see it now; I walk up to the desk sergeant and say, 'Hi there! I found this marijuana and I'm turning it in' He looks me over and asks, 'How old are you?' Being a truthful person, I say, 'Sixteen,' and with a line straight out of Hawaii Five-O, he says, 'Book him, Danno.'"

At this point, I was shuffled again by Fate, and I ended up in the Fairy Godmother Department. (You know--the one with the 85-year-old clerk that works on alternate Wednesdays and knits most of the time.) My father dropped the issue and I dropped the issue--creator in the garbage. Imagine - somewhere out there, a trash burner's day is being made.

Courtney Brown, 12



Mike Neumann, 12

I REMEMBER GRANDPA

Silent tear drops fall
the dark side of my eye
collecting inside,
invisible.

Treading lightly past
closed rooms that once held life
glimpses of the world
my parents knew.

Shadows fill their hearts,
stealing future dreams;
they fear to ignite
the memories.

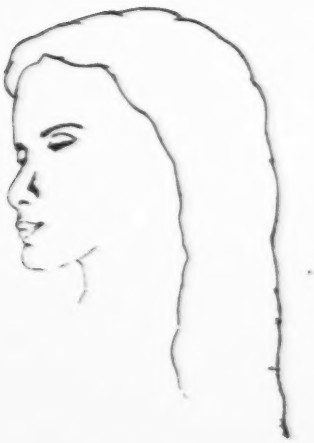
Time would let us grow
like a dormant seed
into the weathered shoes
of ones before.

Kris Andersen, 12

VIOLENCE SOLVES EVERYTHING

Be clever in your task,
Abolish the pensiveness.
Leap through the window silently,
Remember the wench,
Forget your conscience.
Sweat drips from your nervous hand.
Draw, shoot, don't look back.
The problem is gone,
Along with the woman.

Kris Andersen, 12



Tracie Mallatt, 11

THE GIRL WITH THE DANCING EYES

On an island--an island far, far away,
Sits a girl with flowers in her hand.
She dreams of the day when her ship will arrive,
Her treasures to be left in the sand.

Her slender, dark form is a symbol of grace,
A silhouette of beauty to see.
She wonders and wonders to the ends of the earth
What more to life there can be.

The moon's rays glisten upon the sea
And cast shadows 'cross the sand.
Her quiet eyes reflect the light
As they dance with a mysterious plan.

Yet in the midst of the pounding waves,
In the encircling darkness--she prays.
Not with words that are learned or known,
But expressed in her own special way.

Now the sweet flowers lie faded and limp,
The distant sun sets in the skies.
The tide ebbs goodbye and the waves wash farewell
To the girl with the dancing eyes.

Julie Knutson, 11

I DON'T UNDERSTAND

My sister says I will understand better when I'm older, but I'm already ten years old. How much older do I have to get? I know now that my mother and father are gone and I will never see them again. Maybe my sister is really the one that doesn't understand but doesn't want anyone to realize it. So she says that I don't understand. No, she probably just doesn't want to have to discuss it with me.

I remember the day we found out that Mom and Dad wouldn't be coming back. I was upstairs in my bedroom doing my homework. Becky was in the kitchen baking a coming-home cake for Mom and Dad. They had been on their second honeymoon, they called it, Dad's present from his boss, Mr. Raymond, for Mom and Dad's twenty-fifth anniversary. An all-expense-paid holiday for them at some fancy hotel in Hawaii. I didn't want them to go because I would have to spend two whole weeks with Becky, and I figured she would play mother. She didn't, though; in fact, she was great! Anyway, we were just kinda waiting around for the time to go pick up Mom and Dad from the airport. It was only two o'clock and we didn't have to pick them up until four. I remember distinctly that when there was a knock at the door, Becky thought it was Mom and Dad, home early, so she made me hide with the cake while she answered the door. I was gonna jump out and yell "surprise!"

Well, when I realized it wasn't Mom and Dad, I just got up and went to the door to find out who it really was. Becky yelled at me really mean, though, and said for me to go to my room and wait for her to come up. I didn't know what was going on, so I just did what she said. I was supremely mad at her, though, because she yelled at me in front of a stranger. I thought that was real mean.

I went upstairs and flopped down on my bed with my favorite stuffed tiger. Becky thinks I am immature 'cause I still sleep with and play with my stuffed animals, but I am not, 'cause I know that they aren't real. When Becky came upstairs, I pretended not to notice her--to get her back for yelling at me. She got super steamed at that, though, and asked me just to listen to her for a minute and quit acting like a baby (I wasn't; I was just getting her back), because she had something super important to tell me. I slumped into my pillows but turned to her. She told me that Mom and Dad were at the hospital in California because something about their plane catching on fire or something. I admit I kinda didn't understand that then, but that was just because of the way she told me. Becky can be really confusing at times! Anyway, she said that we could go and see them if we could get hold of our uncle John. So we got hold of good old Uncle John and he took us the to bus terminal. I think we should have taken the plane on account of I never flew in one before; but we got on the stinky old bus that I thought was gonna be worse than it was, and went to Anaheim, California. We live real near to California so it didn't take long.

When we finally reached the hospital after two cabs and a lot of money--too much money, Becky said--some stinky old nurse told us we couldn't see Mom and Dad because they could only see blood relatives. Boy, it took a long time to convince her that we were their daughters. When we went into Mom and Dad's room, I finally realized how upset Becky was. I guess it was more serious than I had figured. Mom couldn't talk 'cause of her bandages--she could only nod or shake her head. They were both trying to act as okay-feeling as they could, but I could tell that they were pretending 'cause they always try to put things over on me. Dad could talk, but he didn't say much at all. I couldn't see their faces, and that kinda scared me a lot. We only could stay for forty minutes 'cause some nosy nurse came in and said Mom and Dad had to take some tests. Becky explained what tests were, and I understood terribly good. I don't know why, but all of a sudden I was real scared and didn't know how to act. I looked at Becky, and she had an expression on her face I had never seen on her before. That scared me even more. What I did was I just tore off down the hall.

I can't remember much after that except Becky was chasing me and I ran into some doctor guy. Becky said I fainted or something, and I slept for six whole hours. Gee, maybe Becky is right, like she usually is, but I still think that I understand all there is to understand by now. I mean, it's been almost one whole year since Mom and Dad died. Well, maybe I'll see Mom and Dad soon, and they can explain it to me then. I guess that's really why I took these pills. I hope they work, because I really miss my mommy and daddy. I love them so much!

Meg Klawiter, 11

DARIN'S HAIKU
or
HOW TO DESTROY A POETIC FORM
WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

One man running fast
Chased by huge living green beans
Twilight Zone again

Darin Juenke, 12

Richard Krueger, 12

THE BEAUTY OF GRAVEYARDS

The beauty of graveyards:
Resting places for those
Who shall never awake--
Neatly trimmed weeds
Around cracked headstones
Aged and covered with moss--
Wilted flowers
In a discolored vase--
Freshly dug dirt
Making a mound
Above the rest--
Cold breezes
Tossing dead leaves
Through silent headstones--
Rain gently caressing
The earth
To bring new life
From the old
That lies dormant
Six feet below.

Jeanne Ford, 12

Photo by Lisa Thompson, 12

THE AFFLICTION

He walked wearily down the street with his legs crossing each other and his body swaying back and forth like a drunk. His hair looked as if it were glued on in fragments and combed with a pitchfork. His face had a shiny gloss-covered look and his eyes squinted like those of a smiling Chinese with a black eye. Dried yellowish saliva had crusted around the outside of his lips and his white-spotted, cracked tongue hung limply out of his mouth. His chin and upper jaw were covered with mangled whiskers that resembled the multi-colored mold on six-month-old cheese. He wore a wrinkled, untucked red- and brown-checked flannel shirt with an empty crinkled cigarette pack in his left chest pocket. His pants were becoming stretched out and they caught under the heels of his shoes. His zipper was half-way down, and the excess belt flap swung limply with the movements of his body. In his back left pocket was a newspaper that overlapped his shirt and was about ready to fall out. Where his other back pocket should have been, there was an outline of one with new blue jean material. How a man could become such a sight, I simply could not figure out! So I politely asked him, "Sir, what's wrong?"

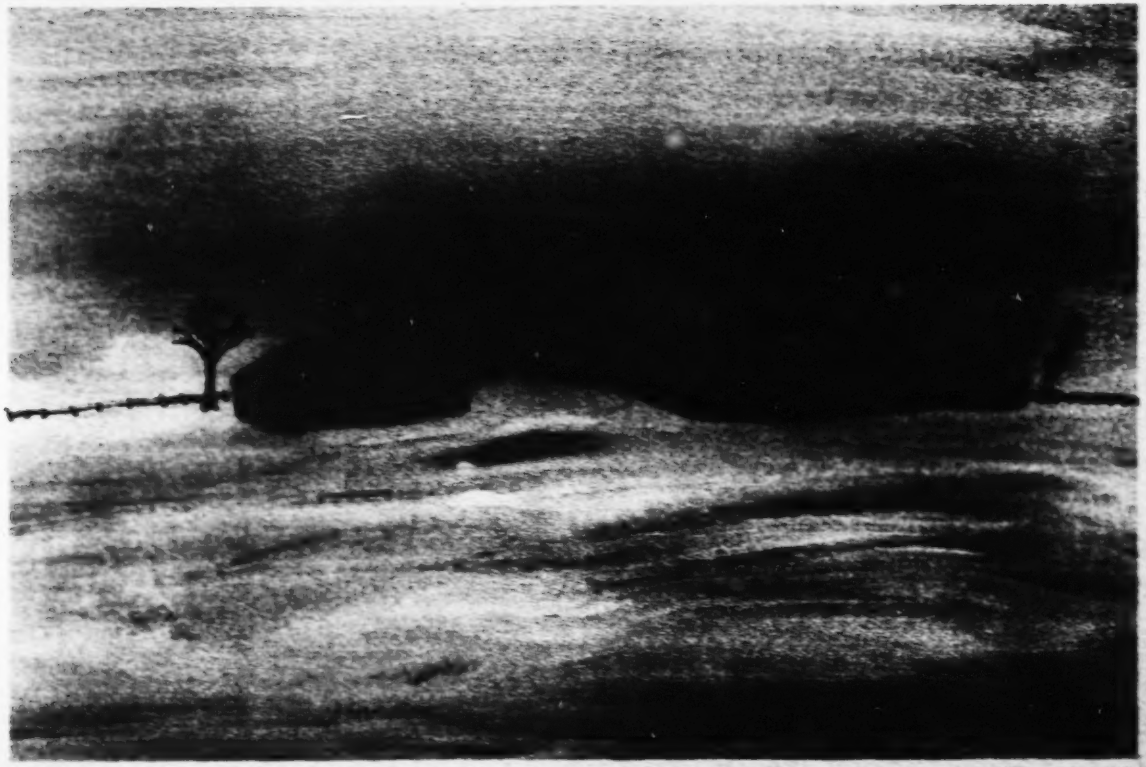
He replied in a soft, scratchy voice, "I can't sleep."

Eric Wells, 11

MAGIC OR MONEY?

Dungeons and Dragons:
Don't play it! they say,
It will warp your mind!
And destroy your grip on reality!
(What's so great about reality?)
It's evil! they say,
It's of the occult!
It is worship to demons!
(So is Monopoly:
The last I heard,
The love of money was the root of all evil.)

Courtney Brown, 12



Dave Peterson, 11

Richard Brown, 12

SITTING ON A LONELY SHORE

Moonlight
Reflecting on shimmering waves of the river--
Dark shadows of the bridge--
The waves lashing out at the rocks--
Frightening figures the trees make
As the moon shines through their branches.
Far-away fires, blinking along the shoreline across the river,
Flicker like fireflies, darting back and forth.
As I turn my head, drinking in the sights,
The last riverboat heads for shore,
Its lights reflecting,
Shining bright,
Its figure barely visible,
The waves whipping trails of foam in
Its passing.
Alone
But not lonely.

Meta Davis, 11

SOMEONE'S HIDING

I feel, see, somehow and in
some way know
that there is someone
in my closet

The first door slams then mine
opens
slightly and lightly
as though its fingers tapped at the
mahogany

I sit scared, and yet, enthralled

Hitler couldn't be
in my closet

My white voile
breathes in and out

My door shuts and now
rebounds
open even wider
I hear trickling

Then suddenly
the breath has blown the life from
my voile curtain

The gate glides open
I now am entranced

Out floats a beauty
that I'm not sure
is true

The ballerina swirls and the
clowns wheel while butterflies
giggle and the little ones
disappear through my screen
past the voile

I awake
I stare up at my attic door
which I left open
after placing
my Diary Dearest
under the pink fiber

Beauty grew
over the top of a soul
creating a fulfilled
Dream

This or that, is or was,
--me--

The door closes
the voile breathes
Someone great stands before
the world

Sherri Hodgin, 12

DISCOVERY

It's not right; something's missing.
Maybe it's fear.
Could be, but it doesn't quite fit.
Ah--sorrow.
No, too easy; don't even have to reach for that one.
An essence of an emotion maybe,
That's far more complex.
I think it's innocence--
Lost in the jumble of maturity.

Emily Snyder, 11

HER CREATION

She created herself a boyfriend
  his companionship
  his loyalty
  his kindness
She made him her husband
They lived
  happy
  together
  in comfort
She stole his heart
  his thoughtfulness
  his loyalty
And tucked them into her handbag
And strolled off
  into a world
  of her own
Where she could sit
  and remember
What she
On her own
  had once created.

Dena Brandeberry, 11

LEGEND

She was a wild creature, like none he had ever seen before. Her dark eyes flashed in the night, and in the wind her hair flew behind her. A carefully placed veil covered her face and hid those dark eyes from the world. A mysterious woman--the demon, she danced as the black shadows of night swallowed her into the darkness.

Ice-blue eyes spotted her first. His warm heart grew into fire when she sang for him the first time. Like the nightingale, when her song was finished, she flew. He dreamt about those dark eyes hidden behind her veil of mystery, and the sound of his maiden's voice echoed over and over in his mind, haunting him, as he waited for the shadow to reappear.

Again she came, riding on the wind, dark hair trailing behind her. She sang again to the wild melody of the birds whose freedom she longed to share. Long, thin fingers set out to capture her prey. The spirit tossed her head back, letting her curls fall behind her, wicked laughter screeching.

Blue eyes strained to see behind that dark veil--but still the mystery remained. True hands tried to hold hers, but those long fingers had their own mind. He bought her soft pearls to hang about her neck and jewels to adorn her fingers. He gave her the companionship of a friend and the charm of a lover. But it was not enough.

A long, thin neck wore those pearls with classic poise, and wicked fingers gladly accepted those rich gems. Still, her dark eyes teased him and her wild voice screeeched; his blue eyes were blind to her teasing, his true ears deaf to her screeching. She stayed only for a little while, humoring him. It was convenient for her.

Soon the darkness of night became a shadow and the sunrise threatened her mystery, revealing her destructive heart and unfaithful eyes. On the winds she flew, back to her home among the wild creatures. She sang again with her sisters, the birds, whose freedom she now shared. Fidelity could not hold her and truth could not tame her wild spirit. In the sunrise his blue eyes found her gone, leaving him with nothing except her ghost to haunt him.

And so the earth was flooded with blue tears, and the glass surrounding his world was shattered by bitter hands. He lost his beautiful goddess to nightmares of a wicked demon tearing him apart with flying arms and flashing eyes.

Sometimes in the darkness of a quiet night, one can still hear the faint sound of a wild voice screeching and singing to the accompaniment of the breeze and the creatures of freedom. The sound grows softer until it fades away, lifted by the winds, swallowed by the night. And then begin the blue rains.

Dawn Doggett, 12

GOOD BYE, FALL

Leaves
d
i
p
tender
faces
into
cool pools
of grass
Bruising themselves
so easily
with
harsh yellows
and clashing oranges
Some turning
radish red
in
embarrassment
of their
f
a
l
l
But not for
long
For they
know
some gentle
person
will soon
bundle them up
for their
long
winter's nap.
Stiff branches
wave
their farewells to
bowling ball birds
stuffed
with
tender bread crumbs
left
just for them
as fall
comes to a
close.
Departing, the birds
chirp
their
goodbyes.
There is a deafening
hush
as a
soft fall wind
blows
a
kiss
goodbye.
It's funny
how the world seems to know
when a season's
Ending.

Dena Brandeberry, 11

WHY?

Another angel's heart was broken today
Her ward took a gun to himself this morning
and broke his angel's heart

But he was such a funny
man
So cheerful
Well hello there how ya doin'?
He was an usher at church
He served on a committee
Held a respectable job
Raised two good kids

Why? people ask
How?
"Well, I hear there was drinking involved."

But I just remember his smile
his laugh,
his help,
his eyes
and my tears are for
him

Another angel's heart was broken today

Scott Iseminger, 12

FORGIVENESS

The leaders stood
Under the stars,
Waiting for the response.

The decision had been made.
They saw no other choice.
The missiles were launched
From the night side of the world.

Where the sun was high,
The people heard
  the Klaxons of war.
In the moments left,
    some prayed
    some ran
    a few fought--
    but most sank into apathy,
    waiting for the end.

Lights flashed, brighter than the sun.
Fire smoked in the rubble.

When day had come to
The side of night,
They asked with puzzlement:
  Why didn't they retaliate?

Courtney Brown, 12

WHEN I GROW UP

Once I saw only the interest in smiles
And I felt only the most genuine hugs.
Listening to someone was once an assurance of caring
And laughter seemed so
  sincere.

Home used to be the center of my world
And leaving it seemed an eternity away.
I remember when holding hands was only for lovers
And handshakes were reserved for
  friends.

Good-bye was once a word I never thought I would use
And today seemed to be the only time that mattered.
Friendship used to be sacred
And kisses were commitments--
  contracts.

Time has taught me that a smile is a greeting
And a hug is something that passes quickly.
Looking interested most often satisfies listening
And laughter soon echoes
  silence.

Home has become a stopping ground
Only to load up and leave again.
Holding hands only means touching
And a handshake is a
  formality.

Good-byes come and go, the sadness soon leaves
And today passes quickly into tomorrow.
Friendships begin and end
Until only a few remain
  special.

Father Time has brought me age
And with it wisdom to determine
Truth from
  deceit.

In good-bye there lies
No never
And in kisses
No
  forever.

Dawn Doggett, 12

STAFF

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Tracie Mallatt, Art Editor
Kris Andersen
Courtney Brown
Nancy Carl
Barry Christiansen
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Meg Klawiter
Julie Knutson
Emily Snyder
Lisa Thompson

ADVISERS

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